

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2054

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

SECDEF

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0772

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK

SUBJECT: U.S. NAVY ACCESS TO STORAGE BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT IN
SINGAPORE

REFS: A. SINGAPORE 0746; B. WELLINGTON 0465 (NOTAL)

1. IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSIONER PEREN
FEBRUARY 24, AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED DURING HIS MEETING
WITH PERMSEC OF MINDEF PANG TEE POWE ON FEBRUARY 22. PEREN SAID HE
HAD RECEIVED NO MESSAGE FROM WELLINGTON ON SUBJECT OF OUR INTEREST
IN NAVAL BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT AND HENCE THIS MATTER WAS ONLY BRIEFLY
TOUCHED ON IN MEETING WITH PANG, WITH NOTHING NEW EMERGING. BULK
OF MEETING CONCERNED NEW ZEALAND NEEDS FOR FACILITIES AFTER BRITISH
PULLOUT AND PEREN SAID HE FOUND MINDEF REPS "MOST COOPERATIVE".

2. AMBASSADOR CONVEYED TO PEREN SUBSTANCE OF REF B. AMBASSADOR COM-
MENTED THAT HE THOUGHT GNZ APPEARED TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT
"SENDING REQUIRED NEW ZEALAND MANPOWER TO SINGAPORE" (PARA 2, REF B).
HE POINTED OUT THERE WERE MANY WAYS TO SOLVE THE MANPOWER PROBLEM
BY HIRING TWO OR THREE BRITISH, AMERICANS OR OTHERS TO PROVIDE THE
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NECESSARY EXPERTISE. NEW ZEALAND WOULD PROVIDE THE UMBRELLA FOR THE

FUEL DEPOT OPERATION, BUT THIS COULD BE DONE WITHOUT BRINGING IN ANY SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL FROM NEW ZEALAND. PEREN AGREED WITH THIS AND PRESUMABLY WILL BE PASSING THIS ON TO HIS GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY WELLINGTON MIGHT ALSO MAKE THIS POINT IN ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH GNZ.

3. AMBASSADOR ALSO COMMENTED THAT VIEW OF S.R. NATHAN, REPORTED REF B, TO EFFECT THAT THERE WAS NO POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR SINGAPORE IN DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE U.S. ON THIS MATTER WAS QUESTIONABLE. HE SAID THE USG SEES DEFINITE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES -- BOTH FROM U.S. POINT OF VIEW AND SINGAPORE'S -- IN HAVING NEW ZEALAND ASSUME CONTROL OF THESE FACILITIES. PEREN SEEMED TO AGREE WITH THIS POINT AS WELL.

4. IN ORDER TO ASSIST GNZ IN REACHING A FINAL DECISION ON MANAGEMENT OF SENOKO IT WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY FOR THE USG TO PROVIDE BASIC DATA CONCERNING STORAGE AMOUNT DESIRED BY PRODUCT AND EXPECTED THROUGH-PUT. BELIEVE THAT THESE FIGURES MUST BE DEVELOPED IN WASHINGTON

SINCE TOTAL CAPACITY THE USG DESIRES OR IS WILLING TO MAINTAIN DEPENDS

ON A COMBINATION OF PACFLT REQUIREMENTS AND DFSA REQUIREMENTS (SEE CINCPACFLT 210532Z JAN 75 NOTAL AND USDAO SINGAPORE 220914Z JAN 75). THIS MUST IN TURN BE COORDINATED WITH RN DESIRES FOR FUEL STORAGE.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE GNZ OVERESTIMATES BOTH COST AND COMPLEXITY OF SENOKO MANAGEMENT (SEE NAVY OFFICE SINGAPORE 140430Z JAN PASEP NOTAL). TOTAL EXPATRIATE PERSONNEL CURRENTLY USED BY UK ARE TWO; ALL OTHER PERSONNEL ARE LOCAL HIRE. IN ADDITION USG (DFSA) CURRENTLY MAINTAINS A PETROLEUM QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICE IN SINGAPORE, STAFFED WITH BASIC EXPERTISE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE CONSULTATIVE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE. WE ESTIMATE SENOKO AND BERTHS COULD BE MANAGED BY SINGLE NZ NAVAL OFFICER WITH ALL REMAINING PERSONNEL INCLUDING SENIOR MANAGEMENT HIRED LOCALLY SOURCE AND WITH ADDITIONAL HELPFUL BUT NOT ESSENTIAL CONSULTATIVE ASSIST FROM DFSA PERSONNEL. CRONK

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